

2013 the absolute sound Editors' Choice Awards

Welcome to the 2013 edition of The Absolute Sound's Editors' Choice Awards, our annual Recommended Products list. On the following pages we present the gear that our editors and writers have selected as most worthy of your consideration. These are the components we ourselves would buy—or recommend to friends and family. Each product category is divided into price ranges, with components listed in order of ascending cost (though a few items, like cables and accessories, are listed alphabetically). Each recommendation is also accompanied by a capsule review, the original reviewer's name or initials, and the issue the review appeared in. Note that in a few cases a product may have been reviewed in one of our sister publications, Playback or AVguide.com, or the review may be pending publication, or the product may not have been formally reviewed but earns a recommendation based on one or more writer's extensive experience with it.

Given that this is the high end, where components generally have long lifespans, some of our recommendations look back several years. At the same time, in an effort to be as selective and up-to-date as possible, we have dropped some components that appeared on last year's list, usually because they have been discontinued but sometimes because fresh competition has caused us to reconsider the choice.

MartinLogan Summit X

\$14,995

martinlogan.com

A hybrid electrostatic and a technological triumph. A Curvilinear Line Source is coupled to an active bass system, which includes a pair of 10" aluminum cone woofers and two 200W Class D amplifiers. Expect bass extension to 20Hz with plenty of slam and no discontinuity at the crossover. Exceptional soundstage transparency is also on tap with traditional ESL transient speed and detail resolution. Tonal balance is slightly on the lean side. Its capacitive impedance mandates a solid-state amplifier with a high damping factor for accurate treble reproduction. DO, 209